



An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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STATEMENT BY THE TANAISTE
DAIL EIREANN, 25 APRIL 1989

h. Warr (01/1)
RS
M. McElroy
See - thanks
27/4

I HAVE RECEIVED A REPORT FROM OUR EMBASSY IN PARIS ABOUT THE ARREST LAST WEEKEND OF AN OFFICIAL ATTACHED TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY IN PARIS, AN AMERICAN CITIZEN AND THREE PERSONS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND WHO WERE ALLEGEDLY IN POSSESSION OF MILITARY MATERIAL. THE AMERICAN CITIZEN AND THE THREE PERSONS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH ILLEGAL DEALING IN WEAPONS. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICIAL WAS A TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER AND THAT HE WAS RELEASED AFTER HIS ARREST BECAUSE OF HIS OFFICIAL STATUS. I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR IN PARIS HAS DECLARED THAT THE OFFICIAL HAS LEFT THE COUNTRY. THE MATTER IS NOW UNDER JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION IN FRANCE AND DEPUTIES WILL UNDERSTAND THAT MY COMMENTS ON THE MATTER MUST, THEREFORE, BE RESTRICTED.

I WOULD LIKE TO SAY FIRST THAT THE AMBASSADOR IN PARIS HAS CONVEYED OUR CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES ON THE SUCCESS OF THEIR SECURITY MEASURES AGAINST AN OPERATION WHICH, APART FROM ITS POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR SECURITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND, COULD HAVE RESULTED IN THE BREAKING OF THE ARMS EMBARGO ON SOUTH AFRICA IMPOSED BY UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 418 OF 1977.

YESTERDAY, I INSTRUCTED THAT A PROTEST BE MADE IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE TERMS TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. THE PROTEST WAS DELIVERED BY OUR AMBASSADOR IN LONDON TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR IN LONDON.

IN THE COURSE OF THE PROTEST, OUR AMBASSADOR REMINDED THE SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR OF SECTARIAN ATTACKS BY LOYALISTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND WHICH, IN THE PAST TWENTY YEARS, HAVE KILLED ALMOST 700 PEOPLE. THE SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR WAS ALSO REMINDED THAT ALREADY THIS YEAR 11 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED BY LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES. THE AMBASSADOR WAS TOLD THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONDEMN IN THE STRONGEST TERMS THE PROVISION OF WEAPONS, OR FUNDS

FOR THE PURCHASE OF WEAPONS, TO ANY GROUP ENGAGED IN VIOLENT ACTIVITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND THAT THEY WISH TO HAVE THE ASSURANCE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT THAT SOUTH AFRICA WILL NOT SUPPLY ANY SUCH WEAPONS OR FUNDS.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN AMBASSADOR HAS TRANSMITTED THE GOVERNMENT'S MESSAGE TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. HE INFORMED OUR AMBASSADOR THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAD SAID THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WAS INVESTIGATING THE MATTER, THAT HE HAD GIVEN THE ASSURANCE THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT IS NOT SUPPLYING WEAPONS TO ANY TERRORIST ORGANISATION AND THAT HE HAD STATED THAT SHOULD ANY ORGANISATION OR INDIVIDUAL IN SOUTH AFRICA HAVE TRANSGRESSED IN THIS SPHERE, ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST THOSE CONCERNED AND AN ASSURANCE WILL BE GIVEN THAT THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN.

I HAVE INFORMED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE ANGLO-IRISH SECRETARIAT, OF OUR DEEP CONCERNS ABOUT THE SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF THIS AFFAIR. THE ABILITY OF LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES TO STEAL WEAPONS FROM ESTABLISHMENTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND IS A GRAVE MATTER. THE QUESTION OF RECENT BREACHES OF SECURITY AT SHORTS AND AT A TERRITORIAL ARMY BASE AT NEWTOWNARDS WERE DISCUSSED. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT THAT, FOLLOWING THE THEFT FROM THE SHORTS FACTORY AT CROSSGAR, BALLINAHINCH, AT THE END OF OCTOBER 1988, A THOROUGH REVIEW OF SECURITY HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE. THIS HAD RESULTED IN A NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS TO SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS BOTH IN RELATION TO THE SECURITY OF THE PREMISES AND TO THE SECURITY SCREENING OF STAFF EMPLOYED AT THE FACTORY. SIMILARLY, SINCE THE THEFT EARLIER THIS MONTH FROM THE TERRITORIAL ARMY BASE IN NEWTOWNARDS, A FULL SECURITY REVIEW IS BEING CARRIED OUT INTO SECURITY AT THE BASE AND OTHER SUCH BASES IN NORTHERN IRELAND. IT WAS CONFIRMED THAT THE ITEMS STOLEN FROM SHORTS WERE PARTS OF THE BLOWPIPE MISSILE SYSTEM, A BLOWPIPE TRAINING SIMULATOR AND PARTS OF THE JAVELIN MISSILE SYSTEM. NONE OF THE ITEMS WERE CAPABLE OF OPERATIONAL USE. THE BLOWPIPE EQUIPMENT STOLEN FROM

THE TERRITORIAL ARMY BASE WAS A TRAINING MODEL IN SECTIONS WHICH WAS NOT CAPABLE OF BEING USED OPERATIONALLY.

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS NOT IN A POSITION AT THE PRESENT TIME TO OFFER A CONCLUSIVE JUDGEMENT ON WHETHER LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES IN THE NORTH HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED SUPPLIES OF WEAPONS FROM SOUTH AFRICA.

I WISH TO ADD THAT THE SECURITY THREAT IN NORTHERN IRELAND, INCLUDING THE THREAT POSED BY LOYALIST ORGANISATIONS, IS KEPT UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW IN THE ANGLO-IRISH CONFERENCE AND IN THE DAILY CONTACTS BETWEEN THE POLICE FORCES. THESE DISCUSSIONS INCLUDE THE ORGANISATION KNOWN AS ULSTER RESISTANCE.

I BELIEVE IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE GREATEST CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN BY CONSTITUTIONAL POLITICIANS IN NORTHERN IRELAND TO SAY AND DO NOTHING WHICH MIGHT ENCOURAGE PARAMILITARY ORGANISATIONS. IN THIS REGARD I NOTE THE REMARKS YESTERDAY BY REV. IAN PAISLEY THAT HIS PARTY HAS NO CONNECTIONS WITH ULSTER RESISTANCE.

I CAN ASSURE THE HOUSE THAT ALL ASPECTS OF THIS AFFAIR WILL CONTINUE TO BE CLOSELY MONITORED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THAT DISCUSSIONS WILL TAKE PLACE WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS AS NECESSARY.

END

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